[26th July 1952

Cost of implementing the Madras Shop Assistants Act.

* 192 *Q.*—SRI T. ANANTHA PAI: Will the Hon. Minister for Industries and Labour be pleased to state what the cost of implementing the Madras Shop Assistants Act to the Government is?

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" About Rs. 9 lakhs per annum."

SRI T. ANANTHA PAI :—" May I know whether the Government consider it necessary to maintain a separate Labour Department to enforce the Madras Shop Assistants Act, or in the alternative, will the Government consider the possibility of effecting economies by abolishing this Department and enforcing the provisions of this Act only when specific complaints are lodged by the employees? "

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" I may tell the hon. Member that this Act benefits $2\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs of people in this State and the number of disputes amicably settled so far is 3,500. In a Welfare State, where happiness and prosperity of labour are involved, I think no expenditure should be considered too much. I am afraid the Government, at present, are committed to this Act."

10-40 a.m. SRI V. V. RAMASAMI :—" May I know whether in urban areas the executive officers and health officers could not be appointed as *ex officio* Inspectors so that reduction could be effected in the cost of the staff employed? "

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" So far as the Factories Act is concerned, the municipal officers are empowered to undertake certain functions but whether they are qualified to administer the Shop Assistants Act is another matter."

SRI V. BALAKRISHNAN :—" May I know if the functions of the Factories Inspector and the Assistant Labour Inspector could not be re-adjusted so as to eliminate supernumerary staff and to effect savings of several lakhs of rupees? "

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" I am afraid we are not now discussing the functions of Factory Inspectors and the question deals with the Shop Assistants Act. But the hon. Member wants to club the two and I do not think the question of the hon. Member arises out of the main question."

SRI V. R. NAGARAJAN :—" What is the total number of Shop Assistant Inspectors functioning under this Act and are the Government satisfied that they are doing satisfactory work? "

MR. SPEAKER :—" This does not arise out of the main question; he may give notice of a separate question."